

Project Summary

For AK PFH 59(1) Snug Harbor Bike Trail and Paving

How the project was accepted:

The Snug Harbor and Bike Trail is a project delivered by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in partnership with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) and the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB). The project was initiated by the Cooper Landing Community and proposed by the ADOT&PF to compete for Federal Lands Access Program Funding <http://www.wfl.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/ak/>. The Program Decision Committee (PDC) comprised of members representing FHWA, ADOT&PF, and the Alaska Municipal League evaluated many proposals and this project was selected for funding with limitations. ADOT&PF is providing matching funding and future maintenance.

The Design Process:

Costs are limited by proposed project funding for a low volume of traffic. The original design concept was to widen the existing road with four to five foot shoulders that could be used for pedestrians and bicyclists, pave the remaining gravel surface to Campus Road, provide fish passage as necessary, and stay within existing Right of Way, if possible. The scope of work accepted by the PDC did not provide for any improvements on the existing pavement. On October 25, 2012, we proposed this concept at a public meeting. We used the Cooper Landing Gem Newsletter, the electronic community email, and postings in the community to announce the public meeting. The meeting had good attendance and interaction. From the responses at the public meeting, FHWA, ADOT&PF and KPB re-evaluated the design and worked on the separated bike trail from Sterling Highway to near Lake Shore Lane. The revised design was accepted by the PDC.

March 2014, a design update was placed in the Cooper Landing Gem Newsletter and placed on the FHWA website, <http://www.wfl.fhwa.dot.gov/projects/ak/snug-harbor/>. A Public Meeting was held on April 2, 2013 at which time approximately 200 comments were received.

Because of the comments from the April 2, 2013 public meeting, another public meeting was held on August 14, 2014 showing the revised design with a separated bike trail on the south side of the road because it had flatter terrain and less impacts to approaches. The separated bike trail termini were determined during a field review with AKDOT&PF and the KPB. In order not to route the bike trail directly onto the Sterling Highway, the bike trail was moved to the north side of the road starting at the Frontage Road and crossing the road to the south side past the Post Office. This realignment had less impact to the wetlands on the south side of the road, retained the trees in front of the Post Office, provided a place to park, and would connect to a proposed bike trail in the community's planning document. The bike trail was terminated at the utility easement on the south side of road before Lake Shore Lane because it provided better sight distance.

The available corridor past Lake Shore Lane is narrow because of the taller cut slopes on one side and the Kenai Lake on the other side. Bike trails with opposing traffic must be separated from the travel lane because bikes should not travel against traffic. It was not economically feasible to provide the separated bike trail to Campus Road, nor was that in the original proposal. Therefore the shoulders were provided from near Lake Shore Lane to Campus Road. The road was moved to the south to lessen the impacts to property owners on the north side, yet still minimized right of way and excavation costs. In some areas, permanent easements are sought to provide areas for future road maintenance. Temporary easements are needed for construction of the project. Temporary permits allow the contractor to improve the owners' approach for the owners' benefit. Some trees may be removed to allow for construction. Generally, these trees will be in the current easement.

Safety and speed were brought up at both public meetings with comments that drivers were traveling beyond the 25 mph in the gravel section. Many suggestions were provided, but would be cost prohibitive. There is four 25 mph speed limit signs proposed alerting drivers to the speed limit. The speed limit will need to be enforced. One foot shoulders will be replaced with four foot shoulders.

The culvert at Shackelford Creek and the ditch along Sterling Highway at the Snug Harbor intersection were determined as fish passage. With design coordination with FHWA, ADOT&PF will install the fish passage culvert next to Sterling Highway as part of their construction contract. FHWA coordinated with Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) early and ADF&G accepted the proposed design. The culverts at Shackelford Creek extend beyond the roadway with enough room to place headwalls to provide the additional widening needed for the shoulder widening. The pipes will not be removed during construction, but erosion control measures will be in place to protect the Shackelford Creek.

Several areas of drainage in the existing roadway were mentioned at the public meetings. Since the existing roadway improvements were not part of this contract, the drainage maintenance remains with the ADOT&PF. Existing culverts in the gravel section were evaluated and will be increased to 24" diameter pipes.

There are areas that need more excavation to provide better stabilization for the proposed paved surface. There are also cut slopes that will have rock inlays to reinforce the slopes and protect the roadway. The road was realigned to avoid steep fills or barren cut slopes where the terrain allowed. Slopes will be reseeded to promote vegetation.

The flat area at the end of the project by Campus Road will now have a 2.5 foot ditch to eliminate the area as a parking facility.

Because of limited funding, a view point that was mentioned in the original proposal was omitted.

The road is maintained by ADOT&PF and the bike trail will be maintained based on ADOT&PF's available schedule.

ADOT&PF is coordinating utility relocation that will be done in the summer of 2015. Since the price of existing copper wire to be spliced for needed extensions is costly, it will be replaced with a less

expensive option that will include fiber optics. Generally, the construction for relocating the utilities should be non-invasive.

ADOT&PF provided a public meeting to address Right of Way and Utility relocation questions on January 29, 2015. A basic description of the acquisition process was delivered to the public. The ADOT&PF are working with property owners to reach a fair agreement. Each negotiation will remain confidential. Offer packets were sent out in March, 2015.

Roadway construction is expected in the summer of 2016.